

A Disciple's Heart

An Introduction to Opening Your Heart to God



William J. Clark, Jr.

with

CH(COL) William J. Clark, Ret.

Keys To Understanding Life Series

A Disciple's Heart
Book 1 of the *Keys To Understanding Life Series*
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www.ADisciplesHeart.com

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Dedicated with honor

*To those who have seen and heard,
To the teachings they have given,
And to those who seek to see and hear.*

PRAISE FOR *A DISCIPLE'S HEART*

The authors' complete lessons are not provided in their entirety here; *A Disciple's Heart* is only Book One in the Clarks' series of lesson plans, titled the "Keys To Understanding Life Series."

- ForeWord CLARION Review

The ability to link the true Discipler (the Holy Spirit) with the disciple (the Christian) is unparalleled. As a former missionary in Africa, *A Disciple's Heart* would have truly benefited me had I read it before going. Had I realized the power of the Holy Spirit available to me, I could have been more prepared to find the comfort and strength that I often lacked. *A Disciple's Heart* reminded me it is possible to experience the presence of God on a daily basis, and to encourage believers that they too are not alone.

- Stephen Allen, former missionary to Africa

A Disciple's Heart brings into focus the kind of discipleship that is intentional, purposeful, and available to every believer. Discipleship is not a church program but a process. Three discipleship settings are described which allow the believer to listen and learn from the Spirit of God. The authors encourage the reader to learn how to have daily, direct communication from The Teacher (Spirit of God within). *A Disciple's Heart* will challenge you and intrigue you. Yearning for more? You will see yourself here.

- Dr. Linda Homeyer, Professor of Professional Counseling, Christian Counselor, Director of Adult Education in her church

I have been blessed to be a part of the authors' ministry for almost 2 years. I have experienced significant changes in all areas of my life especially in my relationships, but most importantly in my relationship with God. *A Disciple's Heart* is a gift to those of us who seek a more intimate relationship with God. The significance of discipleship is huge when you are trying to skillfully listen to God! *A Disciple's Heart* gives wonderful examples of how Christians may learn to listen to God in different discipleship environments. It has helped me to understand the difference between being a passive Christian and an active Christian who can interact with the Holy Spirit of God on a day to day basis. It is a life changing experience.

- Kathleen Repa, Real Estate Agent and mother of two

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It is a challenging walk God calls us to, but we can experience a peace within that is unknown to those who aren't always sure where to step along the way. During the writing we faced some really tough times, but because of the gift of the Spirit of our Lord, our hearts were continually transformed, and we were able to serve God well. We are truly thankful for the gift of being able to interact with God in each challenging situation.

We thank our family for their love, patience and support for us as we wrote and listened to the Spirit of God teaching us how to be thankful, joyful and at peace during times that would have normally been filled with deep sadness! We are deeply grateful to our friends who, during their own busy schedules, were willing to read the manuscript and offer their thoughts and suggestions. We thank our spiritual family, who consistently walks with us, supporting and encouraging us as we seek to do the same for them!

We are grateful to the help and services of Innovo. Their kindness and friendliness has been of great support at precisely the time we needed more of that.

A Disciple's Heart

It is a high calling to walk with the Lord, and we must seek His voice within to walk well with Him. We acknowledge those readers who share in the thoughts given here; may you let the Lord bless you as you live each day seeking to interact with His Spirit within you.

INTRODUCTION

Opening your heart to God involves working with Him to change what is often in your heart. *A Disciple's Heart* reminds us that the purpose of being discipled is to develop your ability to allow the Lord to change your heart.

In being discipled, we focus on learning to open our hearts to God. We seek to understand and learn the principles and teachings contained within the written Word of God. Developing your heart involves learning by allowing the Spirit of God to speak to you in a variety of ways, including through worship, Bible study, prayer, and your interactions with believers.

A Disciple's Heart reminds us that the purpose of being discipled is to help us change how we live by interacting with the Spirit of God within us. Being discipled is to help us reflect the Lord in the ways we act and interact in the multitude of situations we experience in life. Being discipled is about developing your ability to recognize and follow the Spirit's counsel and guidance in your heart so your actions are an expression of what the Lord would have come from your heart. But when we believe we are to be discipled primarily by gaining Scriptural knowledge and information, it is sometimes easy to assume that we are living as disciples of Christ in our daily affairs. How are you being discipled?

We often view discipleship and being discipled as concepts which describe what happens to us when we do the variety of

things we do both in church and in our own devotional or study times. *A Disciple's Heart* examines how the concept of *being disciplined* needs to be closer to the foreground of learning to live for Christ. It seeks to make the task of 'being disciplined' – opening your heart to the Lord – more tangible, based on how discipleship was demonstrated in the Scriptures. It seeks to reinvigorate our concept of 'being disciplined' by placing the spotlight on its relationship to opening our hearts to the voice of the Spirit of Christ within us.

A Disciple's Heart reminds us of the relationship between being disciplined and the opening of our hearts. That relationship between being disciplined and opening our hearts deals with learning to skillfully experience and exercise an ability to interact with God's Holy Spirit as He seeks to interact with us in various life situations.

In short, *A Disciple's Heart* looks at the purpose for having the Spirit of the Lord within us--which, in part, is to help us know what the Lord wants us to do in response to the trials of life. *A Disciple's Heart* seeks to strengthen and encourage those who earnestly want to build continually on that God-given opportunity, with the support of other like-minded believers.

1. DETAILED PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK:

- a. To remind us that the "elementary teachings of Christ" (Hebrews 6:1-3) are only the beginning of discipleship that enables us to live well for Christ in real-life situations.
- b. To remind us that in order for discipleship beyond elementary teachings to be effective, a believer must recognize their own need to be disciplined.
- c. To examine Scriptural descriptions of the "meat" versus

the “milk” of discipling others, and of being disciplined.

- d. To refocus on discipleship as including learning how to have skillful personal *interactions* with Christ by interacting with His Spirit, who was given to us.
- e. To highlight the importance of the personal interactions and bonds between believers, which are vital to being disciplined and learning how to live a life guided by the Spirit.
- f. To remind us that one part of what is to make Christians unique are the kinds of bonds and relationships we have.
- g. To remind us that another part of what is to make Christians stand out is not just *what* we do (go to church, participate in church programs, etc.), but *how* we respond to stressful, emotional and uncomfortable situations common to all mankind.
- h. To highlight, conceptually, the following spiritual skills as being essential to learning to open our hearts and hear the voice of God:
 - i. The skill to recognize when Satan is attacking and tempting us.
 - ii. The skill to transform emotional pain and stress into peace and love.
 - iii. The skill to hear the changes the Spirit seeks to make in us during various life situations.
 - iv. The skill to hear the Spirit's instructions and counsel concerning how to act whenever our choices in real-life situations have spiritual implications. In other words, the skill to live the divine nature of God's written Word by interacting with its Author.

2. FOUNDATIONS:

- a. The Spirit was given to us permanently by the Father as a result of the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf (Ephesians 1:13-14).
- b. There are basic and elementary teachings from the written Word of God which provide the beginning of discipleship (1 Corinthians 3:1-2).
- c. The Spirit is capable of guiding us into all truth we may need to live well as disciples of Christ (John 14:26).
- d. We are capable of tuning out the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19) such that we may not always hear His guidance and counsel for us as individuals.
- e. Being guided into truth involves being able to transform our hearts during trials (Romans 5:3-5). This transformation skill is vital to avoid quenching the Spirit.
- f. To live for the Lord, we must cultivate the skill of paying attention to our hearts (1 John 3:18-24).
- g. The “fulfillment” of being discipled involves becoming skillful at interacting with the Spirit of God in our hearts (1 John 3:18-24).
- h. Interaction with the Spirit, during real-life situations, facilitates continual learning and the ability to continually pass away the old self (2 Corinthians 5:17) whenever it seeks to assert itself in daily living.
- i. Being guided into truth includes being trained by the Lord, and His discipline is not always pleasant (Hebrews 12:11).
- j. Being able to learn from the Lord’s discipline involves learning how to persevere with His guidance and

direction (Hebrews 10:36).

- k. During real-life situations that require us to learn and persevere, we must have faith in order to be at peace with situations when the outcome is uncertain (Hebrews 11).
- l. We need training in handling real-life applications that involve perseverance (Hebrews 10: 36; James 1:2-4). That training goes beyond the elementary teachings of Christ (Hebrews 6:1-3).

3. RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES:

To profit from this book, the only prerequisite is a love for the Lord and a desire to learn more about how to live as His disciple. Some Scripture references are in parenthesis and in the body of the text. They are provided so you may review the Scriptures for yourself; reviewing them is encouraged. However, for the most part, when a Scripture is referenced, the subject of that Scripture is discussed within the text, so you don't have to look it up immediately. Still, taking the time to do so is strongly recommended.

4. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

While this book seeks to provide very useful and practical insights concerning the challenge of living for Christ, it is introductory in nature. This book is the first of a series (described in the back of the book) and emphasizes that discipleship, and being discipled beyond the elementary teachings of Christ, includes cultivating certain spiritual skill sets. **This book does not address the "how to" of the spiritual skills mentioned. The "how to" is a book in its own right (forthcoming – see "coming soon" in the back of this book).**

The discussions presented seek to provide readers, who aren't familiar with the "how to" of those skill sets, an appreciation for **why** cultivating them is critical to their spiritual growth.

The book also serves as an encouragement and reminder for those who disciple others to include training on the vital spiritual skills that the Scriptures indicate are part of being disciplined and learning to experience God more frequently in everyday life. The book indicates that such training compliments believers' abilities to share Christ with others, and it enhances believers' abilities to demonstrate why it is so practical for new believers to also be disciplined.

Finally, though using the terms *skills* and *spiritual skill sets*, this book only seeks to clarify the **concept** that, with God's help, we can become more proficient (be disciplined) in doing our part in responding to the voice of the Spirit of God within our hearts.

Skills in interacting with God have both similarities to and differences from "people skills." You can learn to clarify what you think is being said and ask questions. You can identify and minimize things you do which prevent you from hearing well: learn to catch yourself at jumping to conclusions and avoid assuming the worst about someone or some situations.

With people, profitable two-way communication is not entirely up to you; it hinges on their communication skills too. However, God's communication skills and motives are perfect. He makes no mistakes in what He tells you or how. The more you become skilled in your part of being disciplined by Him through your heart, the more you will be able to understand and participate in the two-way interaction. We cannot acquire these practical kinds of *spiritual skill sets* without God's help. As you read, remember that *spiritual skills* always involve learning to submit, surrender and transform your heart in Christ.

CHAPTER 1:

THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLESHIP

Growth Step 1:

To recognize the goal and purpose of discipleship and to identify the three basic discipleship environments.

Growth Step 2:

To examine what discipleship is supposed to do for your relationship with God.

Growth Step 3:

To understand the five essentials a believer must have to be effectively disciplined beyond the elementary teachings of Christ.

Today, many church leaders are very concerned about the health and vitality of the Body of Christ. They are asking important questions. How do we help Christians mature in the faith? How do we revitalize the church? How do we help Christians deal with the difficult realities of everyday life? How do we help Christians walk with the Lord daily when they are at home, at work, and at play? How do we communicate the specific and real-life nature of what God can do and what He wants to do in a believer's life? How do we teach these things to believers, each of whom is a unique individual with different problems, challenges and life circumstances?

Church leaders are not the only ones asking questions; believers in the pews are too:

- “How does my walk with the Lord make my normal, everyday life better?”
- “How does my personal relationship with God help me deal with real-life issues and problems?”
- “How do I feel good about myself and my relationship with God when I’m not at church and am at work or home?”
- “How do I experience God more?”
- “How do I experience God in daily activities?”
- “How does God speak to me?”
- “What comes after salvation?”
- “What does God want me to do, not just generally in life, but in a particular situation?”

At their core, all these questions and issues deal with a person’s daily walk with Christ. They deal with issues of the heart. The answers come when we are discipled and learn to skillfully open our hearts to the Lord. So, what is discipleship?

The purpose of discipleship is: *learning how to glorify God by intentionally cultivating your personal relationship with Christ (as His disciple) through the ability to hear His Spirit, who permanently dwells within believers because of Jesus’ sacrifice, and who speaks directly to you in your heart, seeking to teach you what is God’s will for you both generally through life and specifically in a given situation.*

That is one long sentence. It leaves a lot of room for discussion, and on its own, it really isn’t adequate. There are several characteristics about the Scriptures, the Spirit of God, and Satan’s intentions which *A Disciple's Heart* holds to be true. Let’s look at them briefly, as they are relevant to discovering what discipleship is and what it should do for us.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DISCIPLESHIP

As a result of Jesus' sacrifice, as believers we have the Spirit of God permanently within us (Ephesians 1:13-14). The Father gave us His Spirit (John 14:26). He is to teach us (John 14:26). The Spirit speaks to us about what He hears in our hearts (John 16:12-16). The Spirit, as Teacher and Guide, speaks to our hearts about the specific application of God's Truth to our unique lives. This is the same Spirit who Authored the Scriptures, God's written Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Discipleship involves learning from the Spirit, Who is available as part of our personal relationship with God. The beginning of discipleship, opening our hearts, involves learning *the elementary teachings of Christ*. The elementary teachings provide a foundation for mentally understanding the nature of our relationship with God, and generally the kinds of experiences we can expect to have as a result of that relationship. This part of discipleship, the elementary teachings, can be taught and learned in a classroom or lecture environment. As we understand those elementary teachings more and more, many real-life applications will become clear, and we begin to open our hearts to the changes in our lives which the Lord desires. However, this beginning part of discipleship is not the sum total of discipleship.

The totality of being discipled doesn't just involve learning that the Spirit plays a vital role in discipleship. It involves learning to interact with Him in our own life experiences. We can slip into thinking that the Spirit's primary method of teaching us is by reminding us about things we have learned from believers and God's written Word. We can call that discipleship, but all too often we run into application issues when such is the extent of our concept of discipleship. When our concept of discipleship focuses on knowledge versus how to

open our hearts, we end up having the questions like the ones in the first two paragraphs of this chapter.

Discipleship isn't just concerned with learning information about the Scriptures, God and Satan, etc. **Learning the elementary teachings is to prepare us to move forward in discipleship, in order to learn where and how to interact more consistently with The Teacher, the Spirit of God. This part of discipleship, which takes us beyond the elementary teachings of Christ, focuses heavily on the application of God's Divine Truth to our lives (Hebrews 6:1-3). This part of discipleship involves developing a critical skill: learning by the Spirit how to be taught continually by the Spirit in our hearts (1 John 2:27).**

Discipleship involves learning *how* to learn from the Spirit when He speaks to us in our hearts. Discipleship is to teach us how to become *skillful* in experiencing God in our normal life circumstances. This involves application skills. Those skills are critical because while the Spirit can use anything and anyone to *try* to get us to hear what He seeks to teach us, whether we actually hear Him depends on what *we* do with the dynamics in our hearts and minds (1 John 3:18-24; 1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The skill of hearing The Teacher may be learned in a relatively short period of time if one is in a solid discipleship environment that goes beyond the elementary teachings of Christ. Still, we never outgrow the need to be discipled by the Spirit (John 14:26; 1 John 2:27). Much, if not most, of the Spirit's guidance to us is quite specific and deals with how we are to handle various life situations. His guidance isn't always given in advance. He usually gives His counsel on an "as the situation arises" basis.

Because we need the counsel of the Spirit to live for the Lord *throughout* life, being conformed to the image of the Lord is a lifelong effort. Being conformed to His image becomes more

realistic when we can consistently hear and follow the guidance, teaching, and counsel of the Spirit whenever He is speaking. Being conformed to the Lord's image is a cooperative effort; we must do our part in learning to hear and submit to His Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The Spirit tries not only to remind us daily of Scriptural teachings, He tries to tell us specifically how to live them in a given situation. We can discover when the Spirit is seeking to do this in us by learning how to pay attention to what is happening in our hearts (1 John 3:18-24). This is possible because God designed our hearts and minds to interact in ways that enable us to hear His voice. This means that when we recognize God's design, we can begin to recognize how to interact with fellow believers in order to improve our spiritual listening skills.

There have been many times when people (in the name of God and under the auspices of discipleship) have twisted and distorted God's Truth and cultivated relationships that do not reflect love and peace. It is important to be able to recognize the characteristics of relationships among believers that facilitate discipleship and being discipled. Those relationships are to help us be discipled and learn how to hear the voice of God for ourselves. While other believers may help us, the point of having the Spirit within you is to become skillful in hearing Him. This skill is vital to living well as a disciple of Christ.

Special Consideration:

When we use the term "disciple of Christ" or "disciples of Christ", we are not referring to a particular denomination or faith group. We are simply referring to believers, Christians in general. Christians were originally known as "disciples of Christ" (Acts 11:26). In using this terminology, we remind

ourselves that as Christians, we are to be disciplined and are to live as disciples. We will examine what that means exactly as we go along.

In addition to an ability to examine the Scriptures and speak to the Lord in prayer, being disciplined involves examining how we live certain aspects of our daily lives. Skillful examination of our lives helps us to discover when we had opportunities to hear the Spirit and to recognize how well we actually heard Him. Our lives contain many application lessons that we must draw on. When we do draw on them, they help us learn how to cultivate a *two-way* interaction with God in much the same way we can have a dialogue with a wise friend.

It is profitable to study God's written Word in order to determine whether what we think God is saying to us is correct (2 Timothy 3:16-17). This is important due to Satan's presence, influence, and attacks. Satan's goals include influencing our ability to apply God's written Word to our lives. This means that the situations where Satan attacks us become the opportunities we may use to learn from and grow in the Spirit.

The real-life situations where Satan seeks to influence us are the situations we can use to be disciplined. Many of our real-life situations and "normal" stresses and struggles are vast spiritual opportunities. The support and encouragement we can receive from fellow believers in spiritually intimate, personal relationships are vital to assisting us in learning to see Satan's attacks on us more clearly. Properly used in conjunction with Scriptural training, those relationships can help us hold ourselves accountable for whatever the Spirit tells us to do or not do when we are attacked and influenced by Satan.

Believers involved together in discipleship are not to seek to control one another. The concept of "you being held

accountable” means that you are responsible for examining your life when the Lord is speaking to you. Believers can help us with this when we commit ourselves to openly sharing when and where the Spirit is speaking to us. Believers can help us double-check our listening processes in very helpful ways once we understand the principles governing how to hear the Spirit of God. Still, it is inappropriate for one believer to try to force another believer to do or change something.

Counting the cost of living for God has always been requisite to following Jesus (Luke 14:26-35). Satan functions to make those costs seem unacceptable. Discipleship involves learning to listen to God for oneself and hearing Him speak to us individually about our specific costs. In being discipled in the company of other believers we may gain an increased awareness of the costs we might have to pay as individuals, but that is not inherently bad. Fellow believers may speak together about costs, but it is inappropriate for fellow believers to try to force them upon one another.

Being a disciple of Christ is not about being removed from the world altogether. When being discipled, some believers may find that the Spirit directs them to work for God in ways that others may consider to be more removed from the world. God’s call to each of us is unique. But because being discipled focuses on applying God’s Truth to our lives, when we are discipled, each of us may come to live quite differently from the world in a variety of ways. This is supposed to be characteristic of all believers. However, some believers handle living differently from the world more easily than others.

Living for the Lord includes learning to discover the Lord’s will concerning areas of life where the Scriptures are silent. The Spirit of God speaks to a disciple of Christ about areas of life where the Scriptures may be silent. This is another reason why we never outgrow our need for the Spirit’s counsel. To facilitate

being disciplined, believers can come together to focus on learning, individually, to hear the Spirit's guidance and counsel concerning life issues in which the written Word is silent.

Listening to the Spirit is NOT the same as speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues is a different kind of interaction with the Spirit and is not the focus of this book. Listening to and hearing the Spirit in the way we are discussing is part of the daily interaction believers can cultivate in order to receive guidance, help, and answers from the Spirit who is providing them.

Finally, discipleship involves deliberate interactions to which a believer must intentionally choose to commit. Discipleship beyond the elementary teachings of Christ cannot be forced on a believer, nor can it be taught through lectures to a believer who is not ready to commit to being disciplined beyond the elementary teachings of Christ. Discipleship beyond the elementary teachings is not something that happens *to us*, nor is it something that we can *do* to someone else. Discipleship beyond elementary teachings involves a kind of relationship in which a believer seeks *to be* disciplined personally, openly and interactively.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "GO BEYOND THE ELEMENTARY TEACHINGS OF CHRIST?"

KEY CONCEPT:

Spiritual maturity does not come mainly by knowledge of the elementary teachings of Christ. Spiritual maturity comes by learning how to persevere and have faith, especially in uncomfortable and painful situations when some of those elementary teachings must be applied and capitalized upon. The Spirit seeks to teach and counsel us in that application; we must be trained.

Hebrews 6:1-3: “Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permits.”

Hebrews 10:15-17: “And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, ‘THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,’ *He then says,* ‘AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.’” (Caps and italics are part of the translation.)

Hebrews 12:11: “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

Going beyond the elementary teachings of Christ involves learning to observe the dynamics in our hearts and minds. When we learn the elementary teachings of Christ (Hebrews 6:1-3) and our hearts begin to change in response, this is the work of the Spirit within us. It isn't just the words of the Scripture which changes our hearts. If it were simply the words that precipitated change, then everyone that read or heard them would change. When our hearts change, we are *participating* with the Spirit in ways that allow our hearts to change. There are certain dynamics that we are capitalizing on when our hearts change. There are also other dynamics we capitalizing on when our hearts do not change.

When we are in some life situation and our hearts are disturbed, 1 John 3:18-24 tells us it is in that moment that the Spirit is speaking to us in our hearts. Hebrews 10:15-16 tells us

why it is that with the heart we can be assured whether or not we understand the will of the Lord for us in a trying situation. Hebrews 12:11 discusses sorrow and situations that are not joyful – painful emotions are the kinds of emotions we often experience in trials.

Going beyond the elementary teachings involves learning from our trials. Trials are associated with the Lord's discipline. Hebrews 12:11 tells us we must be trained when the Lord is disciplining us through trials. We can say we are trained through a trial when our emotional experience in that particular trial shifts from sorrow or pain to become peaceful (Romans 5:3-5). The Spirit seeks to assist us in transformation by training us during our attempts to interact with Him, but He doesn't force us to be transformed during the trial (1 John 3:18-24).

Being disciplined beyond the elementary teachings of Christ is what enables us to draw on the Spirit and learn to avoid sin. When we are not trained by the Lord's discipline during a trial and fail to accept or even recognize the lesson in the Lord's discipline, we sin. Hebrews 10:19 through Hebrews 12 discuss how sin is the result of lack of perseverance and faith when we know what God wants us to do, but the outcome of doing what He wants us to do is *uncertain* in terms of how the world might respond to us. Skillful interaction with the Spirit is essential to always being able to know what God wants us to do in a tough situation. Hebrews 11 provides examples of godly men and women who knew what God wanted them to do. They are examples of how God often asks godly people to act in order to fulfill His will and His Spirit's counsel.

Going beyond the elementary teachings of Christ involves recognizing when the Spirit is speaking. When the Spirit is speaking to us in real-life situations, hearing and understanding His counsel is what is to drive our actions as believers. The Spirit seeks to guide us into God's Truth about the lesson within

the Lord's discipline, which is to influence how we respond to the real-life situations we face. Failure to hear the Spirit correctly often results in sin because we often respond to challenging situations according to our old patterns. Sometimes we sin because it is often hard to understand the "why" behind the Lord's discipline. When very difficult events happen to us, we wonder why the Lord would allow such things to happen *because* we are missing the lesson He seeks to give us.

When we say, "The Lord is disciplining me in such-and-such situation," we often draw very general conclusions as to the purpose of His lesson. We might think it is about faith, or maybe about being more loving, or about being more understanding or accepting of what we cannot control. These kinds of conclusions are often true, but in the course of being disciplined beyond the elementary teachings, a believer consistently learns that the lesson in the Lord's discipline, and His guidance, is much more specific and personal in nature.

Going beyond the elementary teachings of Christ teaches us to hear the Spirit's counsel with clarity and in detail. When we are being disciplined, the Spirit is actually trying to tell us specifically what to say, do, ask, clarify, etc. When we correctly hear Him tell us those specific things to say, do, etc., those specifics may often *appear* to be self-defeating and self-destructive. According to the world, doing some of the things God tells us may actually be self-defeating. This does NOT mean God wants us to be doormats, nor does it mean that when multiple courses of action are open to us that God wants us to take the self-destructive course. It means we usually won't even consider courses of action that do not please us in some way unless we are picking the best of several distasteful courses of action. The only thing that makes the difference in knowing what is God's true will in such cases is the ability to actually hear the voice of the Lord with your heart clearly and

consistently!

Take, for example, Abraham and God's directive for him to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:1-10). The Lord stayed his hand, but Abraham didn't know that He would. Abraham had to know for sure what the Lord wanted of him, and Abraham had to be prepared to follow all the way through! We must be able to know what the Lord wants from us with as much certainty.

We usually dismiss Abraham's situation as different from ours because we believe the Lord communicated with Abraham audibly. Maybe the Lord did speak audibly, but if you will notice, whenever someone in the Bible says that the Lord said "...to me," the verb used is "said." To say means *not just* to say something "verbally," but "to communicate." This is true whether it is "the Lord said," or "Jesus said," or "John said," or "Moses said," or "the Spirit said" (Hebrews 3:7-11 is an example indicating the Spirit said some things to and through David).

Going beyond the elementary teachings of Christ means not just skillfully hearing the Spirit during trials, but skillfully working with him to transform the pain in our hearts. When we talk about transforming pain associated with the Lord's discipline so that we may experience peace, of what kinds of pain are we speaking? Psalm 38 describes the link between our heart disturbances, sin, and physical pains. Hebrews 12:11 indicates emotional pains are also experienced. The following are some examples of the kinds of emotional pain you may feel and be challenged to work with the Spirit to transform.

Anguish, weary, troubled, heavy-laden, grieved, distressed, mocked, anxiety, frustrated, fear, dread, anger, hopeless, lost or adrift, useless, overwhelmed, worn-out (emotionally), disgust, stressed, tense, annoyed, sad, depressed, bored, anxious, worried, concerned, rage,

frightened, upset, aloof, dispassionate, disconnected, puzzled, inadequate, unloved, worthless, hateful, shame, guilt, melancholy, regretful, disappointed, envy, jealous, vengeful, empty, victimized, unappreciated, left out, abandoned, spurned powerless, lack, discouraged, scared, despair, uneasy, etc.

These kinds of emotional responses are disturbances in the heart; they disturb our peace. They often accompany trials and the Lord's discipline. While they are useful in that they indicate there is a spiritual issue the Spirit is speaking to, when such pains last for long periods of time, they can lead to various kinds of health problems. When emotional experiences are prolonged, it indicates we may profit from developing transformation skills. Hearing the Spirit well is directly related to our ability to transform those various forms of pain, and to our ability to properly persevere (Hebrews 10:19-39). The Spirit does not intend for those kinds of emotional experiences to go on and on; however, we must do our part in interacting with Him to transform those pains to peace (Romans 5:3-5).

Special Consideration:

From this point forward, when we talk about "transforming pain to peace," the above emotional responses are among the pains we must be able and prepared to transform. They indicate trials, and that spiritual issues are at stake. When we talk about hearing the Spirit speak to us in "painful or challenging situations," we are talking about the kinds of life situations where we might feel any of the above feelings. The above experiences are ones that disturb the peace we have in our hearts. They are "disturbances in the heart" and indicate times when we are experiencing the voice of the Spirit seeking to

counsel, guide, and teach us. Throughout the reading, you may insert any of those emotional responses when you read the phrases “pain,” “challenging situations,” or “disturbances in the heart.”

When peace seems to come over us easily during a trying situation, we are often unconsciously interacting with the Spirit through our hearts. We simply are not consciously paying attention to what is happening in our hearts. Going beyond the elementary teachings of Christ is to help us become consciously aware of what happens in our hearts when it changes easily, and when it is not changing as easily. This way, when the transformation task does not seem to happen quite as effortlessly, we can intentionally focus on those heart dynamics and participate with the Spirit, allowing Him to teach us and transform our hearts.

When our hearts are disturbed from a place of peace, that disturbance is the indicator that the Spirit is seeking to teach us *what* we need in that moment. The Spirit speaks and seeks to teach us something because we need His teaching, instruction, and counsel in order to live for the Lord in that moment. While we may accurately know Scriptural facts relevant to our situation, the Spirit's teaching often pertains to *how* to transform the heart and apply that knowledge. Interacting skillfully with the Spirit when we are being disciplined is what discipleship beyond the elementary teachings of Christ is all about.

The elementary teachings of Christ are critical. Without the elementary teachings, the goal of consistently interacting with the Spirit when He is speaking is not normally achievable. The elementary teachings are, therefore, part of discipleship because **they lay the foundation for us to *begin learning how to be disciplined by the Spirit when Satan attacks us in normal life***

situations.

Today, the elementary teachings are typically presented in a classroom or lecture environment, i.e. Bible studies, special training classes, Sunday School and sermons. We teach and reiterate these important foundational concepts through various activities and programs. Elementary teachings concerning our relationship with Christ are important because many of them serve the specific purpose of pointing to the possibility of change, even from situations in everyday life when we are not in church. They show us what we are to experience in our interactions with Christ and the Spirit, Whom the Father gave us.

The nature of the elementary teachings of Christ is such that many applications to daily life become readily apparent. However, the elementary teachings are heavy on the informational side. Discussions about the elementary teachings may include discussing how to apply the teachings. But classes with larger audiences and the lecture-style presentations, in which elementary teachings may be taught, are usually not the most beneficial approaches to enable skillful examination of our own specific applications of the teachings.

Going beyond the elementary teachings of Christ focuses specifically on the personal application of Scriptural concepts to our everyday lives and circumstances, as this is what the Spirit often speaks to. As we mentioned, going beyond the elementary teachings involves *how* to discover *when* the Lord is challenging the disciple to persevere in faith in order to walk with God in daily situations (Hebrews 10:19 through Hebrews 12). This means that examining our own daily issues and challenges includes the “personal and private” issues we often do not discuss in church-classroom-like settings.

It is in our own matters of family, priorities, wants, past

pains and wounds, etc., where we often find our trials and lingering issues pertaining to our hearts. In discipleship environments that focus specifically on going beyond the elementary teachings of Christ, the Scriptures are examined so we may observe some of the heart dynamics at work in people whose stories were recorded. This is the *part* of being disciplined which helps us to understand why and how our heart dynamics are linked to the results that follow. But the discipleship environment is not a Bible study. When we study the Scriptures as part of going beyond the elementary teachings of Christ, the point is to learn how to hear the Spirit speaking to us and how to transform the pains and discomforts we often experience when we are disciplined and experience trials.

In many of our personal and private issues, we often simply try to “keep on keeping on.” Going beyond the elementary teachings of Christ is to help us understand why perseverance is NOT about plowing through tough times or simply “forging ahead” when a painful situation cannot be changed. Perseverance is NOT about tolerating an uncomfortable situation until the first viable option for relief presents itself. Perseverance is NOT always about addressing an uncomfortable situation. Perseverance is about fighting the old self within you and changing to the new self. Perseverance involves trying to fight that fight consistently, at the Spirit’s beckoning, and with His specific guidance on how to act externally and fight the old self/Satan internally.

Perseverance is required in order to keep up with the Spirit’s teaching because His counsel and guidance corresponds to everyday life events (Galatians 5:16-26). **Perseverance is necessary in order to determine, in the moment He speaks, whether the Spirit is actually telling you to tolerate an uncomfortable situation, to address an uncomfortable situation, or to follow through with something else He**

already told you to do! And while perseverance may involve dealing with a difficult situation *outside* of you, the true challenge of perseverance is dealing with the spiritual conflict some life situation precipitates *within* you. Consistency in transforming pain to peace is a “must-have” skill.

Going beyond the elementary teachings of Christ teaches us that there is a difference between *you making your own decision* on whether to accept or address something *while believing you are doing God's will*, versus actually involving the Spirit of God in your decision-making processes so that you do God's will. In a given moment when Satan attacks, you must *start* to do God's will by actually changing what the Spirit indicates you must change in you. This must be done *before* you can know whether the Spirit wants you to accept or address some aspect of the life situation you are facing! Read the last two sentences again! Having allowed the Lord to address changes in *you*, perseverance involves following through in demonstrating the changes the Lord has directed in you. This has to do with following through with whatever course(s) of action the Spirit directs you to take in terms of the external situation.

At first, hearing the Spirit of God can be uncomfortable as well as unfamiliar in its application to real-world, external situations. When you have an issue you are dealing with in life, say in regards to being able to provide for your family, you may experience some kind of inner conflict. You have questions. Do you get a new job? Do you stay with the old job? You know there is work to be done, research in the evening hours, not to mention all the other routine things which must be done in day-to-day living. Such times make it tough to be disciplined beyond the elementary teachings of Christ, especially if other issues are confronting you at the same time.

When you are trying to be disciplined beyond the elementary teachings of Christ during hectic times, you are facing a task

that is not uncommon! You are seeking to identify and accept the Spirit's counsel of change in you. You are also seeking to transform inner pains into love and peace. And, in addition to that, you must also deal with the normal affairs of life!

When life gets busy and we face uncomfortable situations, we sometimes don't see the value of learning more about the elementary teachings of Christ, let alone going beyond those teachings. When life gets chaotic, time is at a premium, and we often conclude we do not have enough of it to participate in the "extras." We don't have time for extra teachings that don't bear directly on the decision-making challenges we face in the critical moment. These times are, however, among the times when discipleship beyond the elementary teachings is most relevant and practical. During such times we have the kinds of experiences that are very useful opportunities to be discipled beyond the elementary teachings. The Spirit has much to say during these times. The emotional and emotive dynamics in our hearts indicate that this is true.

Learning to hear and obey the Spirit's voice can be a struggle when the train of life is up to full speed, and then we realize the Lord is trying to make some corrections within us. Part of the cost of serving Him is persevering in hearing His voice when it is tough! This affects us greatly! The challenges that come with simply creating time to learn how to connect with Him can seem to enflame the inner conflict that we fundamentally want to go away. In this way, following Christ involves taking on a cross which unbelievers avoid by simply making their decisions and fulfilling their desires. This cross may appear heavy, but only when we aren't skilled in understanding how we are being asked to surrender to the Lord (Matthew 11:28-29). When we drag out our learning processes by plowing through the busy times in life, we are in effect often resisting the voice of the Spirit. As a result, the burden feels

heavy because of ourselves, not because of God.

In Hebrews 6, the writer says the recipients need to grow up spiritually. From Hebrews 6:13 to 10:18, the writer provides extensive supporting material leading up to a discussion on the practical application of perseverance – that which is beyond the elementary teachings of Christ (Hebrews 10:19-39). Hebrews 11 then provides numerous examples where faith was demonstrated in situations where, *if they were happening to us, we would typically believe God would not ask us to make such sacrifices*. This is the point! How will we know the Spirit's specific direction, overcome doubt, and have faith if we cannot hear Him well or consistently because we are too busy? How will we know what God wants today when we forget what His Spirit counseled us on yesterday? Perseverance and faith are especially critical when we are being disciplined beyond the elementary teachings of Christ because going beyond those teachings is often best learned when life is racing by!

Because hearing the voice of God is a spiritual skill at the most foundational and essential level, spiritual maturity is not measured in years but hinges on *learning* one thing well:

How to allow the Lord to specifically and continually direct our actions, lifestyles, attitudes, preferences, desires, opinions, etc., by learning to listen to Him giving that specific direction through His Spirit in our hearts, especially when life situations are accompanied by emotions within us.

Discipleship beyond the elementary teachings of Christ requires us to use our God-permitted life experiences to learn how to do that one thing. Once it is grasped, a disciple can consistently learn directly from the Spirit of God without a human teacher (1 John 2:27). This does not mean we ever

outgrow our need of the Body of Christ. It does mean that continual change is only possible in Christ one uncomfortable situation at a time because it is then that the Spirit of God is frequently speaking to that change.

Special Consideration 1:

From this point forward, when we use the terms “discipleship” or “being discipled,” we are specifically referring to the aspect of discipleship that goes beyond the elementary teachings of Christ. We are referring to cultivating our ability in Christ to apply God’s divine Word to our lives by interacting skillfully with the Spirit. We are referring to our potential, as believers in Christ, to do our part by developing the skill of hearing the voice of the Spirit with our hearts, the skill of transforming emotional pain to peace, and the skill of submitting our hearts to Christ so that we might realize the new self He seeks to cultivate within us during a specific real-life, uncomfortable situation.

Special Consideration 2:

Also, from this point forward, when we use the term “human teacher”, we are specifically referring to a human teacher that is among those described by 1 John 2:27. This kind of human teacher is capable of discipling believers to go beyond the elementary teachings of Christ. This kind of human teacher is capable of teaching believers the “how to” of interacting with and experiencing the Spirit of God in the way the Scriptures often demonstrate. This kind of human teacher may serve in a variety of roles within the Body of Christ. However, a believer’s ability to teach a Sunday School class or a Bible study, or a believer’s position as a deacon, lay leader, or other leader within the body do not necessarily indicate they are, or are called to be,

human teachers who disciple believers beyond the elementary teachings of Christ. Some believers in these positions are called to serve as human teachers *of* the elementary teachings, not as human teachers that disciple *beyond* the elementary teachings. This is mentioned now because we will be examining *what* this kind of human teacher teaches and the kinds of environments in which this aspect of discipleship is taught. What this book, and 1 John 2:27, means by a human teacher is somewhat different from what we experience with some human teachers today.

Coming in spring 2010!

Keys To Understanding Life Series

presents **Book 2**

Feelings 101: Pain to Peace

A Heart Designed to Hear the Voice of God

www.feelings101.com

The next book in the *Series* provides **textbook material, “hands-on” training, personal evaluation questions and real-life exercises** to help you to *recognize Satan’s tactics* against who you are in Christ, and to *discover the practical nature of listening to the Spirit of God with your heart*. To assist you and enhance your skills of interacting with the Spirit, the book includes a practical and functional approach that relates to everyday living. ***Feelings 101: Pain to Peace*** spotlights two Scriptural keys to being effectively disciplined by The Teacher: recognizing the dynamics of your heart and mind, and applying the principle’s which govern hearing the Spirit with your heart.

- How can you transform, into peace, the emotional pains and discomforts which are often associated with the Lord’s discipline (Hebrews 12:11)?
- How does your old self work to influence how you handle the Spirit’s counsel to your heart, and your ability to recognize when He offers it?
- How can you identify the patterns of your old self and how can you develop your ability to see Satan scheming against you in everyday, real life?

- What kinds of life situations involve spiritual issues and choices? How can you discover God's will for you quickly and accurately in those situations?
- How did God design your heart and mind to function so that you can learn to hear His voice with skill and consistency?
- How can you discover the specific changes God seeks to make in your life?
- How can you develop your ability to discern between the voice of the Spirit and the influence of Satan, regardless of where you are or what you are doing?
- How can you know whether your current priorities are the priorities God would have to influence your life and relationships?
- How can you evaluate your ability to recognize your unique patterns relating to temptation, your ability to hear and experience God, and your ability to discover the areas of your life in which you can better follow Christ?

Coming Soon!

Keys To Understanding Life Series

presents Book 3

Feelings 201: Fellowship for Discipleship

Developing Your Heart with Like-Minded Believers

www.feelings201.com

The third book in the *Series* presents a “hands-on” training guide to assist small groups of like-minded believers in creating and experiencing fellowship specifically for the purpose of discipleship. It walks believers through the kinds of interactions that precipitate dynamic fellowship and strong bonds as they work together, and individually, to be discipled by the Spirit of God.

- Build on and enhance your knowledge of the elementary teachings of Christ.
- Build on and enhance your training in how God designed your heart and mind to function and interact.
- Build on and enhance your experiences with the Scriptural principles which govern how you may hear the voice of the Spirit in your heart.

This book addresses the following issues in useful detail:

- What are the roles for believers that fellowship for discipleship without a human teacher?

- How can you strengthen your ability to live God's written Word in daily life by fellowshiping for discipleship?
- How can you actively seek when and how the Lord would have you improve your walk with Him?
- How can you fine-tune your prayer requests and be sure you make them "in His name"?
- How can you share your real-life experiences in a fellowship in order to profit from support of other like-minded believers?
- How can you listen and interact with believers to encourage each other in developing the spiritual skill of hearing the Spirit's counsel within? How can you assist and challenge others to live for Christ without "stepping on each other's toes"?
- How can you conduct practical exercises that facilitate learning to hear the Spirit and to recognize Satan's influence and the activities of your old self?

More about *Keys To Understanding Life Series*

www.KeysToUnderstandingLife.com

This book is part of the *Keys To Understanding Life Series*. The *Series* focuses on how we may interact with and draw upon the power of the Spirit of God available to us through Christ Jesus in our hearts. (This interaction is different from speaking in tongues.) The Spirit authored the written Word of God, and He uses the divine nature of the Scriptures to speak to our hearts (2 Timothy 2:15-16). The *Series* acknowledges that each of us struggles, or has struggled, to hear the voice of the Spirit clearly in various real-life situations.

The *Series* illuminates how the Scriptures indicate we must do our parts to open our hearts to hear the Spirit within. This is often challenging when, in some life situations, doing so doesn't seem easy or to come naturally. The Scriptures demonstrate how others often heard the voice of God extremely clearly, perhaps even audibly, during challenging situations. The *Series* is tailored to examine how the Scriptures show that we too can, and need, to develop the skill of hearing the counsel of the Spirit of God.

As believers, we are to live as disciples of Christ (Acts 11:26). The Spirit seeks to counsel and teach us. When Jesus ascended, the Father gave believers His Spirit permanently that we might receive the counsel and teaching we need (John 14:26), especially during challenging situations when Satan seeks to influence us to act in untruth (John 16:12-14). Being counseled, guided, and taught by the Spirit is fundamentally about being disciplined by the Spirit of Christ and of the Father, which Jesus secured for us. Unfortunately, we can unknowingly and adversely affect our ability to experience a connection with the

Spirit of God (1 Thessalonians 5:19). This affects our ability to live well for the Lord.

Keys To Understanding Life Series recognizes that each of us has the opportunity to be discipled by the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. We can be discipled through real-life events which are often characterized by emotional discomfort, stress and sometimes overwhelming feelings and frustration. Combined with the written Word of God, learning to hear the Spirit speaking to our hearts helps us to always know God's will for us. In learning to interact with the Spirit in everyday kinds of experiences, we learn to draw on His power and experience our connection with our God, who is always with us.

The books in the *Series* seek to assist believers to develop vital spiritual skill sets, to assist believers in recognizing the spiritual aspects of real-life issues and to answer questions such as:

- What part do we play in working with the Spirit to transform pain to peace?
- How can we interact with the Spirit to recognize and resist Satan's attacks, Satan's agendas, and Satan's use of our old selves in real-life events?
- How can we hear the Spirit in our hearts and understand exactly how God would have us handle situations in real life when we have questions for the Lord?
- What does it mean to be discipled beyond the elementary teachings of Christ?
- How can we develop the skill of listening to the Spirit in fellowship for discipleship with other believers?
- How is being discipled supposed to affect and change our lives?
- How can we use the Scriptures to help us raise our

- How can we make our prayer life more practical and useful and ensure our requests are actually being made “in His name”?
- How do we put the various pieces of the Scriptures together and bring to life the meaning and fulfilling nature of living for God?
- How can we handle conflicts in marriage and dating relationships by integrating the skill of hearing the Spirit’s counsel?
- How can we teach children to hear the Spirit of God in their hearts in order to include Him in their problem-solving processes and to deal with their issues?

In general, there is often a large gap between principles presented in books versus how we must apply the truths to our *unique* life situations. *Keys To Understanding Life Series* focuses deliberately on overcoming that challenge. How does the *Series* accomplish these challenges?¹

1. **A textbook format** is used to walk you through the process of recognizing how relevant Scriptural concepts apply to your unique life experiences.
2. **Key Concepts** highlight and tie together with how God designed our hearts and minds to be able to interact together. God’s design applies to all human beings.
3. **Key Words**, which mean one thing to us today and may be different from the original meaning, are examined in their original language.

¹ Some features may not be used as extensively, or at all in introductory books.

4. **Scripture References** are provided where the text speaks to Scriptural concepts or facts that you may want to examine for yourself.
5. **Diagrams and Charts** depict spiritual dynamics being discussed and provide example information for the skills you can practice.
6. **Special Considerations** point to potential pitfalls, common obstacles, areas of frequent misunderstanding, challenges to real-life application, and expose the tactics Satan often uses against us.
7. **Worksheet Questions and Exercises** provide the meat of application for the material you read. These features are specifically designed to help you examine your daily application opportunities and capitalize on the unique aspects of your life to which the Spirit may be counseling you. These features walk you through the development of your own spiritual skill sets by using your own real-life situations and experiences.

The *Series* cannot help you draw upon the power of God's written Word or the power of the Spirit within you if you do not participate with the Spirit of the Lord by approaching these opportunities with certain heart-felt attitudes and intentions.

1. The Lord will not change your life if you do not pay attention to the way you are and have been living it. He will not change your life if you are not willing to do things differently. You will be challenged to identify the ways you are actually not incorporating what you believe into how you are actually living. If you want to improve how you live for the Lord, then the first truth to accept is that somehow you are not already doing your best – even though that isn't a conscious intention.

2. You must be willing to recognize and accept responsibility for how you interact or fail to interact with the Scriptures, the Author of those Scriptures, and the people and experiences in your life.
3. When life gets tough, and the Spirit is emphasizing ways in which we must change, we often seek distraction. We often try to soak up good times as long as we can when we have been through troubling times. If and when this temptation arises, it is critical to remain consistent in doing your part in exercising the spiritual skill sets you learn through the *Series* and see demonstrated in the Scriptures.
4. We release mental, emotional, and physical tensions in different ways. We often carry at least a little bit of stress, worry, and concern, even when we have the Spirit of God within us. It is important to restrain yourself from accepting these kinds of conditions and be willing to practice transforming stress, worry, etc., to peace by interacting with the Spirit as often as those feelings arise. The *Series* discusses this Scriptural skill.
5. People make mistakes; that includes you and us (the authors). You cannot follow the Lord's counsel and guidance by disregarding, forgetting, or turning a blind eye to your failures, painful experiences, and mistakes. At the same time, you must be willing to transform ungodly experiences of guilt by interacting with the Spirit within.
6. Most of us probably consider at least some of the experiences we have as being out of our control. Hearing the Spirit of God in your heart hinges on you being willing to give up any control issues He may speak to. In practice, this means when you confirm you've understood what the Spirit is telling you to do in a particular situation; you must follow through with what He tells you. That isn't always easy or comfortable to the old self. If following through with His

7. If you have reoccurring trouble in a particular area of life, don't assume because you may not have been successful in connecting with the Lord before that it will always be too hard. Overcoming yesterday's failures, experiencing certainty today, and developing a consistent confidence in tomorrow are things the *Series* can help you accomplish. We are not talking about solving the mysteries of the universe here. We are talking about hearing the Spirit's counsel and teaching so we might understand, work through, and eliminate the sense of being ill-prepared for life's surprises and the "gray areas" of life. But you must strive to be consistent in doing your part.
8. Learn to criticize your old self. This is vital to new-self honesty. You must be willing to identify the facts and *feelings* of your life situations as you "fill in the blanks" in the exercises the *Series* provides. If you can't recognize how you feel or identify the desires of your old self, you will continually struggle with hearing the Spirit speak to courses of actions that would only make sense if your heart were focused on your new self. Criticizing your old self involves identifying desires you may have to change.
9. Verify the Scriptures yourself. Many references are provided – check them out. Examine the passages provided with other passages relating to the same concepts. Studying the Scriptures and attending regular worship is a critical part of our service to God.

Keys To Understanding Life Series isn't a collection of new concepts. When we have challenges in life, we sometimes have the right concepts, but we are thrown off due to the unique ways we must apply them to our unique lives! This is where the

omnipresent Spirit works to help us. When we discover useful, Scriptural applications by *interacting* with the Spirit of God, old concepts often appear new. The *Series* addresses application issues by introducing our own choices and actions as being critical variables in what we could loosely call “life’s equations.” When we live according to the divine nature of God’s written word, and the word of the Author of those Scriptures within us, our life equations can begin to add up to what the Lord would have it to equal. This is an old concept. If the *Series* ever seems to come across with new concepts, it is only because when we examine the Scriptures in terms of our real-life emotional and intellectual experiences, old concepts can have fresh light shed upon them.

Thank you Lord for the opportunity to receive Your help and guidance in our own lives. Thank You for allowing us to be useful tools in Your hands.

May God bless you, the reader, in all your choices, and may you come to love all aspects and experiences of your life, so that you may come to love the Creator more and live well for Him.

About The Authors

The father and son team combine a variety of experiences, including formal theological education, creating spiritually intimate fellowships and teaching powerful personal transformation skills possible in Christ. From their home in Texas, they help others learn how to enjoy the enriching and interactive life of being a disciple of Christ.

Learn more about the authors by visiting their website:
www.KeysToUnderstandingLife.com.

They [the authors] pose honest questions and provide honest answers, never sugar-coating their responses as many religious guides tend to do.

- ForeWord CLARION Review

Have you ever wondered what the Lord wanted you to do in a particular situation? Do you hear His voice clearly when you try to listen to Him? Do you find that sometimes it is easy to hear the voice of God, but at other times it is almost impossible? A Disciple's Heart helps you consider how well you listen with your heart, in order to discover how your spiritual listening skills may be strengthened.

When we seek more in our relationships with God, we are seeking to open our hearts to Him with intention. Join us as we examine how being discipled relates to developing our hearts. Learn how discipleship is to help us embrace the guidance, counsel and comfort of The Teacher, the Spirit of God, with our hearts. Come with us as we discover what it means to hear God's voice in our hearts whether we are making big life decisions or facing normal everyday issues.

Keys To Understanding Life Series

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